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THE BUILDING OF SOCIALISM IN THE EUROPEAN PEOPLE'S DEMOCRACIES

## I. EVALUATION

This book, Der Aufbau des Sozialismus in den europaischen Laendern der Volksdemokratie, published by Volk und Wissen Volkseigner Verlag, Berlin, 1954, is a collection of excerpts from speeches, newspaper and magazine articles, books, and other printed material originally published in the Soviet Bloc countries and previously reprinted in translation or in the original German in various East German publications. These quotations, varying from a few lines to one or two pages, are arranged within the framework of a logically conceived table of contents.

The table of contents -- actually a frame of reference -- and a short preface are the only original contributions of the editors, who otherwise limited themselves to the selecting and sorting of available appropriate material.

The editors grouped the material in seven main chapters. The first three chapters are devoted to the theoretical, economic, and political foundations of a People's Democracy. Chapters IV and V contain examples of the material, social, and cultural achievements in each of the satellite countries. Chapter VI illustrates the peaceful intentions of the European People's Democracies by quotations covering altogether four pages. Chapter VII contains eight biographical sketches of prominent political personalities, none of them from the GDR.

The appendix consists of six pages of meager, partly obsolete, statistical material, mostly taken from Statistische Praxis, an East Berlin monthly periodical, and a one-page chart on the foreign trade of the satellites with a cut-off date of 1951. None of the statistical material refers to the GDR.

The two and a half page bibliography enumerates only material for the six "older" satellites and contains nothing on the GDR, although the list is limited exclusively to German-language material.

In tenor, the book is a fervent eulogy of the form of government called People's Democracy. This effect is achieved by the skillful selection and arrangement of the excerpts which make up the book. The proven method of repetition is frequently resorted to.

The theoretical part (Chapters I -- III) is decidedly superior to the subsequent chapters. This is probably due to the abundance of this kind of discussion material in the German language. Moreover, this type of presentation needs no clear-cut distinction between facts and fables, between stated goals and actual realization. Chapter III (The Political Foundation of People's Democracy) includes some cleverly chosen lengthy excerpts on constitutional principles by N. P. Farberov, a propaganda piece against the aggressiveness of the US by B. Leont'yev, and a short statement on the class struggle by A. Cepicka.

Factual information should be contained in Chapters IV to VI but it is almost totally lacking. Statements in flowery language made by prominent personalities on special occasions are given in place of facts; existing conditions, plans, and promises for the future, theoretical doctrines, and barefaced propaganda are fused into the same pronouncements.

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This report gives a verbatim translation of the table of contents which by its details points up every facet of the subject matter which the authors try to present. It must be cautioned, however, that the chapter headings and subtitles promise infinitely more than is answered in the body of the book.

Many subtitles refer only to one or two short paragraphs, as can be seen by the page numbers included in the table of contents. They indicate clearly how little space the book devotes to the many important questions which it purports to answer.

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